Mizzou Leads the Way on Contingent Faculty Role and Same-sex Spousal Benefits

by David Robinson

University of Missouri Board of Curators has taken votes recently that will likely bring improvements to faculty working conditions: the inclusion of non-tenure-track faculty in university shared governance and the inclusion of same-sex couples

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2013 AAUP annual meeting, in DC

The annual meeting in Washington DC was a tour de force for Missouri Conference, and this is especially notable these days as our state is without collective-bargaining chapters. The work of our advocacy chapters and the coordination by the Missouri Conference owed much to our own members, of course, but also to people like Donna Potts (Kansas St.U.), outgoing chair of cont., p. 3

MOAAUP annual meeting
in Diastole Scholars’ Center, UMKC, Feb. 16
Minutes and more photos, pp. 4-6.

Above: invited speaker, Amy Blouin, Missouri Budget Project

Below: some of the audience in the Kiva (l. to r.): Barrie Talbott, Jim Borgwald, Stephen Montgomery-Smith, Kathryn Brammall, Marc Becker, Scott Baker (lower)
AAUP Annual Meeting, Mayflower Hotel, Washington DC. Above: Stacey Harris, banquet speaker
Below: MOAAUP Pres. David Robinson (center-right) during Association business meeting
AAUP Annual Meeting, continued

Assembly of State Conferences, and Bob Kreiser, AAUP staffer extraordinaire. Both have since moved out of their positions, leaving us, among others, to carry on their work. John Slosar (SLU), John Hopper (Northwest Missouri St.U.), and David Gruber (Truman St.U.) certainly did much to establish Missouri’s place in general AAUP lore; I think that we “done them proud” at this past national meeting in the nation’s capital, 20-23 June 2013.

At the ASC Friday morning session:

Linda Hand, Steven (Stacey) Harris, and David K. Robinson anchored a panel discussion on “AAUP Success Stories.” Noting the number of administrative firings and forced retirements amid controversies with faculty, one attendee remarked that Missouri Conference was a kind of Darwinian predator—“red in tooth and claw.” We, however, emphasize that the faculty and their governance led the way in disposing of those administrators who had worn out their welcomes; the AAUP was there to provide a more comfortable venue for faculty meetings and other support during the difficult process.

At the ASC business meeting Friday night:

Linda Hand (Missouri Southern State University) was one the 2013 recipients of the John Hopper Travel Award, which goes to nominated and selected individuals attending their first annual meeting. For more on this award program: http://aaup.org/about/awards/chapters-and-conferences

At the AAUP Saturday Luncheon:

Janese Silvey, formerly of the Columbia Daily Tribune, was one of the 2013 recipients of the Iris Molotsky Award for Excellence in Coverage of Higher Education. The AAUP’s purpose in giving this annual award is to recognize exceptional journalism and to encourage thoughtful, in-depth coverage of issues that are critical to faculty and higher education. Silvey was nominated by the University of Missouri Columbia Chapter.

Janese Silvey’s “Closure and Reopening of the University of Missouri Press” ran from May 24 to November 27, 2012. Silvey’s persistence in getting to the truth of how the closure was effected, who was behind it, and who stood to gain from it resulted in more than thirty articles published in the Columbia Daily Tribune in 2012. The media coverage drew national attention to the administration’s actions all summer, leading to a reversal of the decision to close the press and the rehiring of its senior editors. Perhaps just as important, the closure and reopening of the University of Missouri Press has opened a nationwide conversation about the dissemination of scholarly findings, the definition of shared governance in decisions about auxiliary units, and administrative transparency.

“Covering the failed attempt to close the University of Missouri Press was really a roller-coaster ride,” Silvey commented. “At times, it appeared the Save the Missouri Press campaign was a lost cause. Some questioned why I continued to report on it when the decision to shut down the UM Press had apparently been finalized. But the authors, publishers, book distributors and readers cared too deeply to let the UM Press—or the story—die. Because the Save the Missouri Press supporters were so active, the story continued to have a life—and ultimately those actions saved the press.” Source: http://aaup.org/media-release/aaup-presents-award-excellence-coverage-higher-education

At the AAUP Saturday Banquet:

Steven (Stacey) Harris (Saint Louis University) was the banquet speaker, and he was introduced by B. Robert Kreiser, veteran AAUP staffer and dear friend of Missouri Conference. This was Bob’s final official duty at a national meeting. As part of the introduction, Bob also conferred the Konheim Travel Award on Stacey. http://aaup.org/about/awards/konheimtravelgrant The SLU Chapter had earlier this year received the Beatrice G. Konheim Award for outstanding chapter. http://aaup.org/about/awards/beatricekonheim Stacey’s banquet address recounted the saga of SLU faculty (“You are a member of the Rebel Alliance and a traitor!”) holding out, and holding together, against Darth Provost and Father Emperor, until both were vanquished. Exciting stuff, especially because the struggle was not quite over at the time.

Association committee appointments:

Steven (Stacey) Harris (Saint Louis University) has been named to the Committee on Sexual Diversity and Gender Identity (term ending 2016). This AAUP standing committee researches, monitors, and educates members of the higher education community and the public on issues relating to sexual diversity and gender identity. It also works with other committees (government relations, governance, and Committee A, for example) to promote fair and inclusive policies on these matters on campuses and in the legislatures. http://aaup.org/about/committees/standing-committees#sdgicomm

David K. Robinson (Truman State University) has been appointed to one of Association’s business committees, the Committee on Membership, which reviews and makes recommendations to the national Council and the annual meeting regarding the Association’s membership policies, level of dues, and categories of membership. Each year the committee examines approximately one third of the state conferences enrolled in the Association’s mandatory dues program and recommends reauthorization when appropriate. The committee also explores ways to increase membership. http://aaup.org/about/committees/association-business-committees#membercomm
Ask colleagues to join AAUP. The new, graduated dues structure helps us involve junior and contingent faculty. Join at [www.aaup.org](http://www.aaup.org) by clicking on “Get involved.”

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Left: MOAAUP President **David Robinson** proudly be-stows the **2013 Gruber Award** on Conference secretary-treasurer, **Barrie Talbott**.

**Kathryn Brammall** and **Barrie Talbott** at registration in Diastole library.

**Linda Hand** accepts MOAAUP Appreciation on behalf of her MSSU colleague, **Patricia Murphy**, who completed service as a state officer.

**Take Class Action!**

**Linda Hand** accepts MOAAUP Appreciation on behalf of her MSSU colleague, **Patricia Murphy**, who completed service as a state officer.
Minutes: MOAAUP Annual State Meeting

Diestole Scholars Center, UMKC, 16 Feb 2013

Members attending: Scott Baker, Jim Borgwald, Marc Becker, Kathryn Brammall, Hali Fieldman, Ed Gogole, Linda Hand, John Harms, John Knapp, Stephen Montgomery Smith, David Naugler, Roger Pick (host), David K. Robinson (presiding), Barrie Talbott (secretary), and Glen Young.

After a coffee hour, the meeting in the beautiful Diastole Center began about 10 a.m. with John Harms welcoming us and introducing the guest speaker, Amy Blouin, Executive Director of the Missouri Budget Project. She gave an overview of the Missouri Budget Project, a non-profit organization established in 2003 to inform Missourians about budget and tax issues and to provide citizens with non-partisan information. She delivered a PowerPoint presentation, “The FY 2014 Budget Proposal and What’s Happening in the 2013 State Legislative Session.”

After the presentation, Blouin and participants further discussed the following topics: (1) The future may see a TABOR, a more drastic version of the Hancock Amendment; (2) The legislature’s point of view on higher education as well as other public services is problematic; (3) Missouri’s regressive tax system rather than a progressive one. What faculty can do to help: (1) Synthesize the effects of lost faculty and budget cuts, clearly showing the impact on the classroom and students to legislators and the public; (2) Monitor how institutions spend capital money (e.g. instructional investments rather than parking garages and athletic palaces); (3) Focus on increasing revenue streams rather than pitting education against other social services; (4) MOAAUP could join the coalition: Invest in Missouri (and there was general assent to this).

Reports from institutions:

MSSU has new VPAA; President Bruce Speck authored an article, “The Myth of Faculty Governance”; the Board has three openings for members that have not been filled. [By summer the openings were filled and the president was forced to resign.]

MU-Columbia: Reversal of decision on the closure of the University of Missouri Press after receiving pressure. The Chancellor announced on March 12, 2012, that the Nuclear Science and Engineering Institute (NSEI), reported in The Chronicle as the #1 program, would close March 15. This decision violates the rules and regulations of the University for restructuring programs and departments. [By fall the Chancellor and Provost had announced their retirements; the Graduate Dean had moved; NSEI issues, especially concerning graduate programs, remain.]

MSU finally has new appointments to its Board of Governors, and Cliff Smart, former University Counsel, has been appointed president.

Lincoln has an interim VPAA, and the president retired without much warning, leaving a total of eight interim positions. Previous administrative searches included no faculty. There is lower enrollment for fall, which results in budget loss. Lincoln failed two of the state’s new performance-funding requirements. The administration suspended tenure and promotion until program review (possibly to eliminate programs). [Over the summer a new president was hired, with some participation by faculty and use of a search firm.] SEMO is currently rewriting the faculty handbook. The administration is pushing to hire more non-tenured faculty and offering more online courses; there is high turnover rate in administration.

Truman: the new provost abruptly dismissed one of the long-serving deans; everyone is looking at budget issues and online offerings.

SLU experienced a highly publicized post-tenure review catastrophe, dumping a VPAA, and no-confidence vote for President Biondi; there is a big surge in AAUP chapter activity. [By summer the president was forced into retirement.]

Rockhurst chapter has 18 members, focusing on improving chapter development. Historically, there is a good relationship between the AAUP and administration.

Ozarks Technical Community College: The Affordable Care Act will have a big impact on adjunct instructors in terms of hours they can teach, in order to keep them off the benefits roll.

Old Business: Approval of minutes and treasurer’s report. Roger Pick moves and John Harms seconds. Results of vote for delegates for national AAUP meeting in June (from seven qualified chapter delegates voting via secret ballot): Linda Hand, David Robinson, John Knapp (alternate), Kathryn Brammall (alternate).

MOAAUP Officer Election (two-year term, 2013-15):

President: David Robinson (Truman)
Vice President: Greg Comer (SLU)
Treasurer/Secretary: Barrie Talbott (OTCC)
Past President: Keith Hardeman (Westminster)
Members-at-Large: Jim Borgwald (Lincoln), John Harms (MSU), David Naugler (SEMS), Roger Pick (UMKC), and John Knapp (MSSU)

Awards and Honors:

Patricia Murphy (MSSU) was awarded the MOAAUP Certificate for Appreciation for Service as a Missouri Conference officer. She drafted policies for her university and was also recognized for her work by the MSSU Faculty Senate. Linda Hand accepted the award on her behalf.

Barrie Talbott (OTCC) was awarded the 2013 David F. Gruber Leadership Development Award. The award provided funding to attend the St. Louis Regional Meeting in the fall of 2012.

New Business: Question from John Knapp whether there is money to have AAUP national speakers come to a chapter’s campus. David Robinson noted that such chapter-development money is available (possibly $500). John Knapp asked about MSSU not getting their chapter dues. Jim Borgwald is getting nothing back for Lincoln, and neither has Roger Pick at UMKC.

3:08 p.m. President David Robinson adjourns meeting.
Jim Borgwald and Glen Young, above, and John Harms, left, enjoying the amenities of Diastole, The Mary Clark and E. Grey Dimond Scholars’ Center, UMKC
(and their dependents) in university benefits. Both changes came after hard work and careful consideration by Mizzou faculty groups, including the AAUP chapter in Columbia.

In the case of contingent faculty participation in governance, approved in the Curators meeting in April, the faculty’s major concern was not whether they should have a role, but how this could be done safely, since contingent faculty do not have the protections of academic freedom afforded by tenure. The solution, at least for now, is to exclude contingent representatives from voting only on university issues that are specifically related to tenure.

Most state university presidents have been reluctant to move on same-sex partner benefits until UM took that step. Finally, by unanimous vote on June 13, the University of Missouri Board of Curators approved employee benefits for “sponsored adult dependents,” a group that includes same-sex couples. Since then Missouri State University and Truman State University have also offered these benefits to employees’ families. MOAAUP officers will survey the situation in the rest of the state and private institutions in Missouri.

Since the issue may come up at your college or university, here is the critical definition that UM adopted; it seems to be guiding schools that have already followed suit:

“To be eligible, a sponsored adult dependent must:

• be at least 18 years old,
• have shared the same residence as the employee for at least one year and continue to share the same residence, disregarding temporary absences because of special circumstances,
• not be currently married to another person under statutory or common law,
• not be related to the employee by a degree that would prohibit lawful marriage in the state in which the employee resides, and
• and not be eligible for Medicare.”
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**Chapter Service Program:** The Missouri Conference stands ready to aid AAUP chapters and members in any way that it can. If you work in Missouri and do not have a local chapter, feel free to contact any Conference officer directly, especially Chapter Service Director, John Harms: JohnHarms@missouristate.edu (tel. 417-836-5676).